

HIV vaccine trial participation among ethnic minority communities: barriers, motivators, and implications for recruitment.

Newman PA, Duan N, Roberts KJ, Seiden D, Rudy ET, Swendeman D, Popova S.

BACKGROUND: Underrepresentation of ethnic minority communities limits the generalizability of HIV vaccine trial results. We explored perceived barriers and motivators regarding HIV vaccine trial participation among low-socioeconomic ethnic minority respondents at risk for HIV.

METHODS: Six focus group interviews were conducted using a semistructured interview guide. Participants (N = 58, mean age = 36 years, 37% female, and 56% Latino/a and 35% African American) were recruited using venue-based sampling in Los Angeles. Data were analyzed using narrative thematic analysis and Ethnograph qualitative software.

RESULTS: Perceived barriers to HIV vaccine trial participation, in rank order, were (1) vaccine-induced HIV infection, (2) physical side effects, (3) uncertainty about vaccine efficacy, (4) uncertainty about other vaccine characteristics, (5) mistrust, (6) low perceived HIV risk, (7) study demands, (8) stigma, and (9) vaccine-induced HIV seropositivity. Motivators were (1) protection against HIV infection, (2) free insurance and/or medical care, (3) altruism, and (4) monetary incentives.

CONCLUSIONS: Population-specific HIV vaccine trial recruitment and implementation strategies should address trial risks from a family perspective, cultural gender norms, mistrust, low perceived HIV risk, the importance of African-American and Latino/a community participation in HIV vaccine trials, and misconceptions about gaining protection against HIV infection. Increasing the cultural relevance of trial recruitment and implementation should facilitate the participation of Latinos/as and African Americans in HIV vaccine trials.